

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4527

To authorize the President to present a gold medal on behalf of the Congress to the Navajo Code Talkers in recognition of their contributions to the Nation.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 23, 2000

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico (for himself and Mr. UDALL of Colorado) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Banking and Financial Services

A BILL

To authorize the President to present a gold medal on behalf of the Congress to the Navajo Code Talkers in recognition of their contributions to the Nation.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 This Act may be cited as the “Honoring the Navajo
4 Code Talkers Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

6 Congress finds the following:

7 (1) On December 7, 1941, the Japanese Em-
8 pire attacked Pearl Harbor and war was declared by
9 Congress the following day.

1 (2) The military code, developed by the United
2 States for transmitting messages, had been deci-
3 phered by the Japanese and a search by United
4 States military intelligence was made to develop new
5 means to counter the enemy.

6 (3) The United States Government called upon
7 the Navajo Nation to support the military effort by
8 recruiting and enlisting 29 Navajo men to serve as
9 Marine Corps radio operators; the number of enlist-
10 ees later increased to over 350.

11 (4) At the time, the Navajos were second-class
12 citizens, and they were a people who were discour-
13 aged from using their own language.

14 (5) The Navajo Marine Corps radio operators,
15 who became known as the Navajo Code Talkers,
16 were used to develop a code using their language to
17 communicate military messages in the Pacific.

18 (6) To the enemy's frustration, the code devel-
19 oped by these Native Americans proved to be un-
20 breakable and was used extensively throughout the
21 Pacific theater.

22 (7) The Navajo language, discouraged in the
23 past, was instrumental in developing the most sig-
24 nificant and successful military code of the time. At

1 Iwo Jima alone, the Navajo Code Talkers passed
2 over 800 error-free messages in a 48-hour period.

3 (A) So successful were they, that military
4 commanders credited the code with saving the
5 lives of countless American soldiers and the
6 successful engagements of the United States in
7 the battles of Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan,
8 Iwo Jima, and Okinawa;

9 (B) So successful were they, that some
10 Code Talkers were guarded by fellow marines
11 whose role was to kill them in case of imminent
12 capture by the enemy; and

13 (C) So successful were they, that the code
14 was kept secret for 23 years after the end of
15 World War II.

16 (8) Following the conclusion of World War II,
17 the Department of Defense maintained the secrecy
18 of the Navajo code until it was declassified in 1968;
19 only then did a realization of the sacrifice and valor
20 of these brave Native Americans emerge from his-
21 tory.

22 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

23 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The President is
24 authorized to present to each of the original 29 Navajo
25 Code Talkers, or a surviving family member, on behalf of

1 the Congress, a gold medal of appropriate design, hon-
2 oring the Navajo Code Talkers. The President is further
3 authorized to present to each man who qualified as a Nav-
4 ajo Code Talker (MOS 642), or a surviving family mem-
5 ber, a silver medal with suitable emblems and devices.
6 These medals are to express recognition by the United
7 States of America and its citizens in honoring the Navajo
8 Code Talkers who distinguished themselves in performing
9 a unique, highly successful communications operation that
10 greatly assisted in saving countless lives and in hastening
11 the end of World War II in the Pacific.

12 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the
13 presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary
14 of the Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the
15 “Secretary”) shall strike gold and silver medals with suit-
16 able emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined
17 by the Secretary.

18 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

19 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
20 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3
21 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe,
22 and at a price sufficient to cover the costs thereof, includ-
23 ing labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead
24 expenses, and the cost of the gold medal.

1 **SEC. 5. STATUS AS NATIONAL MEDALS.**

2 The medals struck pursuant to this Act are national
3 medals for purposes of chapter 51, of title 31, United
4 States Code.

5 **SEC. 6. FUNDING.**

6 (a) **AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.**—There is
7 authorized to be charged against the United States Mint
8 Public Enterprise Fund an amount not to exceed \$30,000
9 to pay for the costs of the medals authorized by this Act.

10 (b) **PROCEEDS OF SALE.**—Amounts received from the
11 sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 3 shall be
12 deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise
13 Fund.

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